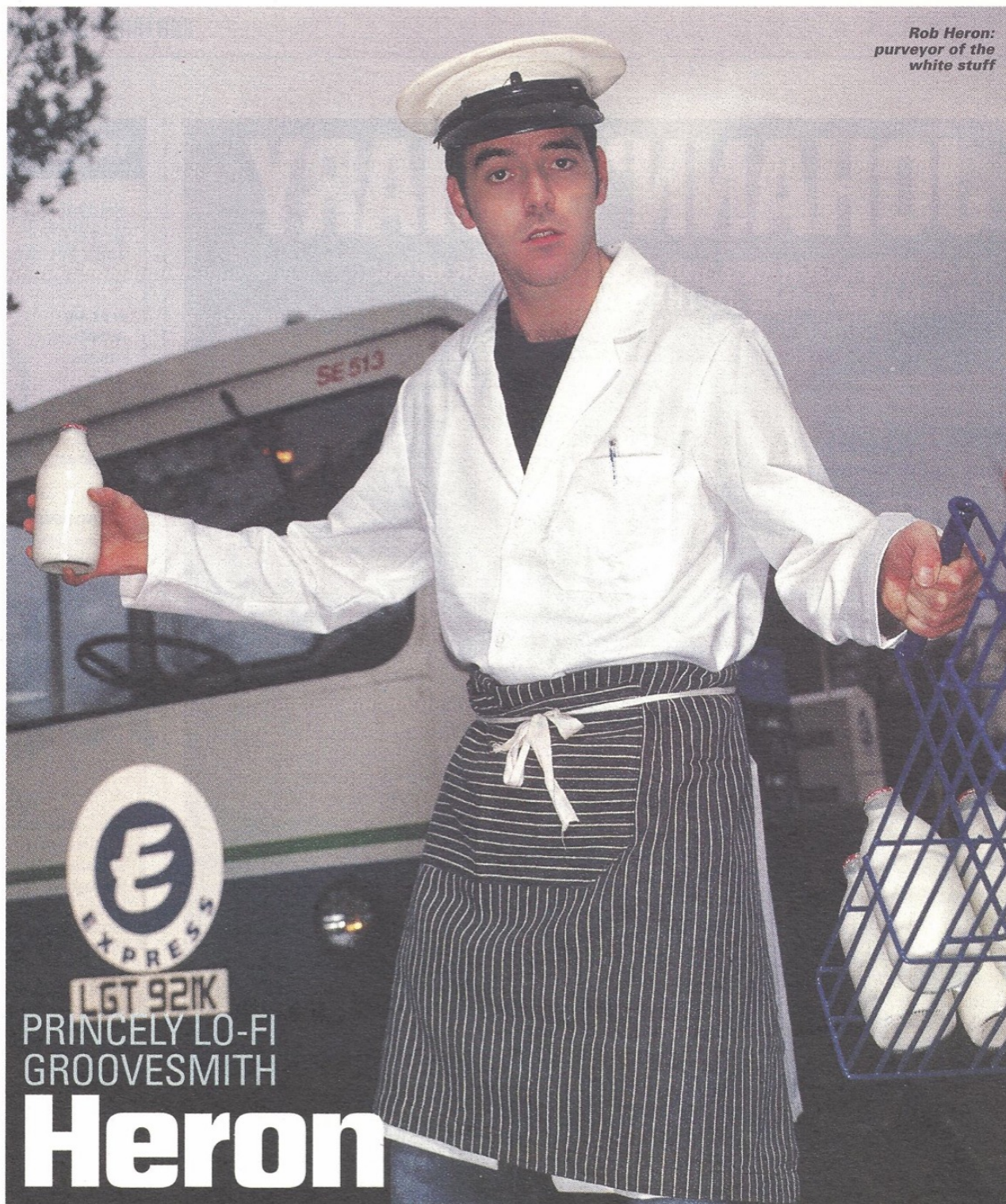


**Rob Heron:**  
purveyor of the  
white stuff



PRINCELY LO-FI  
GROOVESMITH

# Heron

**f**or proof that the artists whose creative flames burn the brightest are the ones who thumb their noses at fashion, spend half an hour in the company of Heron's debut album 'The Brown Room'.

Here is a record that bathes in the dim glow of a lo-fi, blues-soaked atmosphere but bears no resemblance to The White Stripes. That turns tricks with sweet minimalist beats, but only knows Timbaland as a purveyor of sturdy footwear. That, surely, regards nu-metal as the sickly dog it is. It's a record that's one of the finest debuts you'll hear in 2002.

"It's the sort of record that I'd like to buy," is the pithy explanation of Heron – a Liverpudlian one-man band, christened Rob Heron. "The important thing is that it's

out there in the world, and you can only hope that even a small minority like the same sort of stuff as I do."

And Heron crams a dizzying variety of 'stuff' into 'The Brown Room's ten tracks: slovenly country-rock ('We Get High'), twisted no-budget electro ('J-Funk') and the sparkingly jazzy pop of 'I Want 2 Know' being just a starter. Think Prince before he turned into a twat and Beck before he turned into Prince; two icons that, handily, Heron cites as his primary influences.

"With Prince, 'Sign O' The Times' was the first record I got into; my sister was playing it too loud and I had to go and say, 'What's that you're listening to?' After that there was a whole back catalogue to trawl through. And once I'd gone through all his bootlegs, Beck came along."

There are clear parallels too in Heron's prolific approach to songwriting. Despite having only two seven-inches to his name (both released on his own Cracked Analogue label) there's enough tunes tucked away in his eight-track to "put two or three records out a year".

A solo artist in the most literal sense (everything he's done to date has been written, recorded, produced and directed by him and him alone; it's only recently he's recruited a band for possible future live dates), he's making a noise that genuinely sounds like music made for his own entertainment. In a dispiritingly careerist rock climate, Heron is a vital jet of fresh air.

**Noel Gardner**

**'THE BROWN ROOM' LP IS OUT NOW ON HUT –  
HEAR A TRACK FROM IT NOW ON [NME.COM](http://NME.COM)**